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THE PURITY OF GOD OPPOSED TO SIN,

A Sermon,

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(Furnished for the Pulpit by request.)

Habbakkuk i. 13.—"*Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity.*"

One of the first duties of a minister of Christ, if he would be instrumental in the salvation of the souls of his hearers, is to convince them of sin. Without this, his preaching will not only be in vain, but worse than in vain. "They that are whole, need not a physician, but they that are sick;" and unless the sinner is convinced of sin, he will never feel his need of a Saviour, or apply to Christ for cleansing; without which, his knowledge of divine truth, and of his duty to God, will only serve to aggravate his guilt, and final condemnation.

There is nothing in the whole universe of God, so odious in his sight as sin. It is so utterly hateful, that he cannot look with complacency upon any object that is polluted with it, or regard it in any degree but with perfect abhorrence. This truth is clearly revealed in the text, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity."

My object in this discourse will be to show, why God hates sin,—to illustrate the truth, that he does hate it, and then draw some such inferences, as may lead to more just views of

sin, and show the personal guilt, and danger of every one who is implicated in it.

I. I am first to show, why God hates sin.

One reason for this may be found in the benevolence of God. He made his creatures to be happy, and in their happiness he continually delights. But to happiness, sin is a most uncompromising adversary. It never fails to blight and destroy every thing like permanent enjoyment; and its direct tendency is to the production of misery. Wretchedness and wo are its legitimate offspring. It has been the cause of all the misery and suffering that ever existed in the universe of God. God, therefore, cannot behold it but with abhorrence. His hatred of it must be just in proportion to the degree of his benevolence; and as his benevolence is infinite, unchangeable, and eternal, so must he ever look upon sin with infinite, unchangeable, and eternal hatred and detestation.

But the great principle upon which God's hatred of sin depends,—the source in which it originates, and from which it always has flowed, and for ever must without interruption flow —is the inviolable purity of God himself. Such is he in the essential and eternally existent principles of his nature, that he cannot behold evil, or look upon iniquity.

Perfect purity, or holiness, is one of the attributes which compose the character of God. It is a part in the very essence of Deity, and indispensably necessary to his existence. Without it, there would be no such being as God; for a being destitute of this purity, would scarcely resemble the present Governor of the universe. But to this principle, sin is directly and absolutely opposed. Like light and darkness, they are in their very nature for ever separated. The most distant approximation can never take place between them; but the sight of one must always be most offensive in the eyes of the other. God, therefore, possessing this attribute of purity,—since it exists in him infinite and entire, it is impossible that he should look upon sin but with utter loathing—it must for ever be in his sight infinitely hateful. His unyielding hatred of sin, and inability to behold it, have not their origin in the will of God, but in the eternal

and immutable principles of his nature. They exist from everlasting to everlasting, in the very essence of his being.

II. Having thus shown why God hates sin, I proceed to illustrate the truth that he does hate it.

Here let me remark, that there is no such thing as sin, abstractly considered. It has no existence, except in relation to moral agents. All the hatred, therefore, which exists in the mind of God towards it, and all the woes which he has denounced against it, must be viewed as falling directly upon the sinner.

1. The first proof that I shall bring of God's utter hatred of sin, is found in the express declarations of his word. "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity." "The Lord trieth the righteous, but the wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth." "The foolish shall not stand in thy sight; thou hatest all workers of iniquity." "Three shepherds also I cut off in one month, and my soul loathed them." "Ye shall not walk in the manner of the nations, which I cast out before you, for they committed all these things, and therefore I abhorred them." In these declarations of God, is seen how absolutely hateful, loathsome, and abhorrent, sin appears in his sight.

2. Again, I adduce the threatenings of God against sinners. "The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God." "The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, with his mighty angels, in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ; who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power." "Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile." Let these suffice. How infinitely odious in the sight of God must sin be, if he will thus deal with the work of his own hands, because contaminated with it!

Lastly, I appeal to the past dealings of God with sinners in illustration of this truth.

The first case here presented is that of our first parents. For

them and their posterity, God appears to have performed all the six days' work of creation. For them he planted the garden; and with them, the last and noblest work of his lower creation,—whom he had formed in his own image, and after his own likeness,—he was wont to hold free intercourse and communion. Pure as he was pure,—holy as he was holy,—happy as he was happy,—the just formed, and perfect work of his own hand, for whom all other things were made, and who stood as the chief ornament and glory of the world,—how dear and precious must they have been in his sight. With what complacency and delight must he have viewed their innocent joy, and beheld in them the commencement of—what would have been—unending fruition. But when the first act of sin was committed by them, so offensive was it to his nature, that he drove them from his presence, and for their sake cursed the earth on which they dwelt. For that one stain upon the creation, which he had just then finished in all the perfection and beauty of his own handy work, he doomed the whole to sorrow, and passed on man through every succeeding generation, the irrevocable sentence of death.

Another display of God's wrath against sin, is found in the destruction of the world by the flood. When "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, it repented the Lord that he had made man, and it grieved him at his heart. And the Lord said, I will destroy man, whom I have created, from the face of the earth." Greatly as the human race was then multiplied, and reluctant as the benevolent Creator must have been to the destruction of such vast numbers of immortal beings, whom he himself had formed; so abhorrent was this wickedness to the purity of his character, that he opened the windows of heaven,—broke up the fountains of the great deep, and covered the whole face of the earth from his sight, as if it had been one vast receptacle of pollution.

A third instance may be seen in the dealings of God with his own chosen people Israel, "to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; whose are the

fathers, and of whom, as concerning the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever." What people did God ever so delight in—so distinguish and honor— so manifestly and signally bless? Why, then, do we read of such judgments which befell them, and of the wrath of God so often kindled against them? Why do we read of their being wasted in the desert by plagues, and pestilence, and serpents, and sword, and fruitless wanderings? Why do we read of the oath of God, that they should never enter into his rest? Why do we read of wars that wasted them, and of their captivity to the heathen? Why do we read such fearful predictions, uttered by the Saviour against their city, Jerusalem, which were so soon to be fulfilled in its most awful overthrow? Why have they ceased to exist as a nation? Why are they now scattered, and despised, and oppressed, among every people under heaven? and why do they now go down to death, under the hopeless and eternal curse of their once signally favourable and compassionate Jehovah?—but that he "is of purer eyes than to behold evil," and not able to look on iniquity.

Loudly as such exhibitions as these proclaim God's utter hatred of sin, similar examples are to be found upon every page of man's history, from the fall of Adam to the present hour. Turn where you will, and you find it inscribed as in letters of flame, "Thou art of purer eyes than to behold evil, and canst not look on iniquity."

But there are yet other examples which display this attribute of God, in still more overwhelming, and awful characters. One of these is found in the case of the apostate angels. It is not recorded upon the page of inspiration, merely for the gratification of curiosity, that "God spared not the angels which sinned, but cast them down to hell, reserved in everlasting chains, under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day." In it is seen, with one exception, the most awful manifestation of God's ineffable purity, and hatred of sin, that was ever beheld. They were, as we suppose, among the most exalted of the creation of God—the noblest work that his almighty hand had ever formed. They bore more of his own image—had

been perfectly holy—had exhibited perfect love, and rendered perfect worship and obedience. They had dwelt in his presence —been the inmates of his temple, and the attendants of his throne. Before him they were wont to cast their glittering crowns, and bow their glorious forms in humble adoration. There they had tuned their harps and joined their voices, to swell the blissful strains of love and praise, that echoed through the vaults of heaven. But when the stain of sin was found upon them, their judgment of a long time lingered not, and their damnation slumbered not. He swept them from his presence and abode, down to the regions of blackness of darkness for ever. What an aspect of odium must sin wear in his sight, that he should thus doom the angels of his glory, because it was found upon them; that hell should have received its first tenants from within the temple, and around the throne of God!

The last illustration which I shall bring, is found in the sufferings of Jesus Christ. In these is seen the most terrific display of this attribute of God, which was ever made; and one which exhibits the truth, that he is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and not able to look on iniquity, with a clearness which must place it for ever beyond contradiction or dispute. For when his own Son, who in himself had not a stain of guilt, took upon him our sins, and stood as our surety, we hear him cry, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" He could not look upon the Son of his love, while he stood as a sinner, although the sins he bore were not his own, but assumed by him in love to men. He hid his face; he took not one drop from the bitter cup; he drew his sword, and without abatement or relenting, bathed it in the blood of his own son, till the demands of justice were satisfied, and the atonement for sin was finished! In view of this example, I ask, When will God relent at the sight of sin? When will he yield, or look with indulgence upon it, if he would not here? When can he, if he could not here? When can he, since he did not here? What would become of the character of God, if ever, after having dealt thus with his own son, he should relax in his demands upon sinners? No; he never can relax! Here the last hope

of his relenting must expire! If the thrice repeated agonizing cry, "*Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me,*" proceeding from the lips of his own, his only, his dearly beloved Son, who had dwelt in his bosom, and been his co-equal occupant of the throne of heaven from the beginning, was unavailing, no appeal can ever move him: the cross of Christ shows his hatred of sin to be infinite, and for ever unchangeable.

The cause of God's hatred of sin being shown, and the truth illustrated that he does hate it with an eternal, and unmitigable hatred, I proceed, as was proposed, to draw some inferences from this subject.

I. And first; since God's hatred of sin springs from an essential and inviolable principle in his nature,—since it exists in the very essence of the Deity himself,—it must continue to all eternity. While God has being, it can never cease or change. In his view, sin must always appear equally odious;—it must always excite the same emotions of disgust and loathing;—call forth the same unyielding opposition, and receive at his hand, the same unmitigated doom.

II. We infer from this subject again, that were it not for the atonement of Christ, through which sinners have returned to God, and been cleansed, and by which the way is opened for others to return, that day would long ago have been witnessed, "in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, and the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up." God is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and not able to look on iniquity; but from the time that a Saviour was promised until now, there have always been some, on whom he could look,—some, who being clad in the righteousness of Christ, were pure in his sight: and these, acting as the salt of the earth, have preserved it hitherto from that destruction which awaits it. "Precious in the sight of the Lord, is the death of his saints;" therefore the world, abhorrent as it must appear in the eyes of his purity,—greatly as he must loathe it on account of sin, is still upheld and permitted to exist.

III. We infer again from all that has been said, that in the

whole universe of God, there are no two objects more really, more widely, more effectually and eternally separated, than God and the sinner. Allow me, my friends, to be faithful to your souls and my God, in whose name I speak. I would be understood as including every individual who hears me, that has not secured an interest in the redemption of Christ. It is an appalling truth, but it is a necessary consequence of the immaculate purity of God,—it is exhibited through all the volume of his word, and in all his past dealings with sinners, from the time he cast the angels out of heaven, and drove Adam from the garden, until the heaving of the last sigh that has escaped the breast of a suffering mortal.

But upon this point I must enlarge a little: for, if it is true, that such an infinite and eternal separation has taken place between you and your God, it is of the utmost importance that you should be convinced of this truth, and feel its awfully constraining power.

There is a great mistake existing among men, with regard to the amount of their wickedness, and the degree of their guilt, as it appears in the sight of God. They class a great many of their sins with what they call small sins, which is a class no where mentioned, or even recognized in the volume of sacred truth. The Bible says, "Sin is the transgression of the law;" if then you are an actual sinner at all, you have transgressed the law of God. Now whether it is a small thing for man to break the laws of God,—for a creature of earth to violate the authority of heaven, judge for yourselves.

But this mistake arises in a still greater degree, from the wrong or partial standard, by which men try their characters. Impenitent men, when forming an estimate of moral character, appeal only to the second table of God's law,—that which speaks of their duty to their neighbours, and never to the first, or that which speaks of their duty to God. You may go to them with the hope of convincing them of sin, and as you point out their short comings in duty, and innumerable transgressions, you will find their memories stored with an account of the correctness and morality of their lives. They will tell you of the upright-

ness of their dealings,—their perfect honesty,—their charity,—benevolent feelings,—amiable deportment and kindness to all around them. And many will add to all this, that they have never in their life intentionally wronged or injured any man, and that in taking a retrospect of the past, they see very little that calls for repentance. All this you may hear; but you will never find a man to stand up in the presence of God and say, I have never failed to love the Lord my God with all my heart, and with all my soul, and with all my mind, and with all my strength. But this God requires with no less positiveness than the other. Indeed it is the first, and great commandment, upon which the right performance of all the rest depends. Suppose then, that all which you claim for yourselves was allowed,—that you had never come short of your duty to your neighbour in the smallest matter, still how would your characters appear in the sight of him, who declares himself to be a JEALOUS God?—who will visit in his jealousy, and not suffer the honour due to his name to be withheld, or given to another?

You hold in the greatest abhorrence what the world calls flagrant sins, as dishonesty, lying, theft, robbery, murder, and such like, and are ready to admit, if you were guilty of these,—especially if you had taken the life of a fellow creature,—that you would be among the very chief of sinners. But whence arises your horror for these things? It is not because they are acts of disobedience against God; but because they are such heinous offences against men. Your abhorrence of a crime increases, just in proportion to its magnitude in the eyes of the world, or the injury which society, or some individual person sustains on its account. Now, without detracting in the smallest degree from the guilt of these heinous sins, but looking upon them with all the horror in which they have ever been held in your estimation;—suppose you had been guilty of them all, and had even caused the streets of your village to flow with the blood of every citizen in it,—how would this compare—aside from its being an act of disobedience to the divine command—with a single failure in duty to the great incomprehensible, eternal God? Translate yourself from this work of death when

done, into his presence, and from thence—as you behold every eye in heaven turned toward the unutterable glory which beams from his throne, and every celestial spirit bowed with the profoundest reverence before him—look back upon the scene and contrast it with a single indignity shown to his awful majesty, and how is it lost in comparison! In his sight "the inhabitants of the earth are as grasshoppers;" "the nations are as a drop of a bucket, and are counted as the small dust of the balance;" "all nations before him, are as nothing, and they are counted to him as less than nothing and vanity." How then can an amount of guilt be contracted by wickedness towards men, that shall equal the smallest neglect or offence shown to the Almighty God himself! And now, my beloved friends, let me ask—not the wicked as you call them—but the most perfectly moral and amiable,—the most pure, and lovely, and sinless object before me,—how stands your character in the sight of that God, who demands the supreme affections of your heart, and how will you stand before him in judgment?

But it is not necessary that I should exhibit you as great sinners, in order to show that your separation from God is infinite and eternal:—if you have ever committed one sin, even of the lightest hue, it is enough. It will not bring upon you so great a weight of wrath; but with its stain remaining, where God and Christ are, you can never come. It will inevitably place you upon the other side of that "great gulph," which separates the dwellings of the blessed from the world of wo. Look at the angels whom God cast from his presence. How long, think you, was their rebellion endured in heaven? Look at our first parents. Can you commit a smaller sin than that which Adam committed? But oh, what a curse it brought! You have felt its effects too deeply, to deny its reality. If that one spot upon this lower creation was enough to bring the curse of God upon the whole, and the sentence of sorrow and death upon all the race of man to the end of time, how will your *individual soul* stand in his presence, with the stain of sin upon it! If he would thus doom a world, and all the countless millions who should ever inhabit it, for one sin, what must be the doom

of a single, separate, isolated soul, upon whom the guilt of sin is found! And yet, there your soul must stand, to abide the sentence which that same God will pronounce.

But I have somewhere met with another thought upon this point. It was this. If God can pass by one sin, why can he not pass by two? And then, why not more? and why not more? and why not any number? Where can the line of separation between the righteous and the wicked be fixed, since the government of God is a moral government, and its rectitude must be manifest to all his intelligent creation—if that of absolute purity is passed? If God should ever be so moved by his compassion as to overlook one transgression, and admit a soul to heaven that had the stain of one sin upon it, how could he refuse to admit a soul that had the stain of two? and how refuse one that had the stain of more! and at length, how could another soul, no matter how deep his guilt, be denied his presence?—How could the spirits already damned, when those of equal guilt with them had entered heaven, be denied a release? And when hell had begun to disgorge itself, where could the mark of prohibition be drawn, until the last fiend, reeking with infernal vengeance, had left his dark abode, ascended up to heaven, and entered the temple and presence of his God!

But the impossibility that God should ever pass by a single sin, and the truth of the sinner's everlasting separation from him, is, if possible, still more immutably fixed, in the absolute purity of his own nature. He is of purer eyes than to behold evil, and not able to look on iniquity. Not *will* not, but *cannot*. Look at what he has said of his utter hatred, loathing, and abhorrence of sin, and see if it is not true. Look at his threatenings against sinners; look at what he has done; see the whole world lying under a perpetual curse, for one spot of sin contracted by the dearest object that God had here created; see it again buried by the deluge; see that beloved and chosen people of God, the descendants of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, scattered and despised, and oppressed, through every nation under heaven; see these sons of light and glory fall from heaven; see the Lamb of God, in whom the Father's soul

was well pleased, crying, *Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani;*—look at the immaculate purity of God himself, and in view of all this, say what is real, effectual, infinite, and, eternal, if your separation from God is not, unless absolutely pure! O how shall fallen man be just with *such* a God! O the awful purity of God and heaven! O how is *that* heaven even to be entered! How is man to approach and stand, where angels fell!

We see from this subject, in the last place, that there is but one way by which any soul can be saved. It is delightful, after thus exhibiting the inevitable destruction which awaits the sinner, to say to you, that there is *one way* of deliverance. And could I not do it,—God forbid that such a declaration of truth should ever have passed my lips, in the presence of intelligent, reflecting, and feeling man. There is a fountain opened in the house of David for sin and uncleanness. Here, perfect purity, that which God can look upon and accept, may be obtained. This fountain is the blood of JESUS; and there is no other name under heaven, given among men, whereby ye must be saved." It matters not whether your sins are many or few, there is sufficient efficacy in his blood to take out every stain, while by no other means can the smallest be removed. That "great multitude which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues," that St. John in his vision of the Revelation, saw before the throne of God, were they who had washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Not a soul from this earth has ever joined it, or ever can join it, whose robe has not been thus washed.—The fountain is still open, and whosoever will, let him come.—If your guilt is great, come and wash. If it is small—(we have seen the guilt of no sinner so)—but if you have supposed it small, come and wash. That cleansing, without which you can never see God, is to be secured no where else. And will you remain for ever thus separated from him, eternally banished from his presence, because your garments are not as foul as others?—It is said of that great multitude, who had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, "*Therefore* are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple:" for this reason, and for this alone, *that they had*

washed. Come then, ye immortal spirits, ye never-dying sinners, come without exception, and without excuse, to this fountain, and be cleansed. Your eternal all depends on this, and this alone. Why will ye endure the unutterable wrath of Almighty God eternally, when the remedy is so freely offered!—Pure as God and heaven are, only come and wash, and you shall be approved and enter. That purity shall be your joy, instead of terror, for in it you shall find delight, ineffable, for ever, and for ever.

ON MANUAL LABOUR IN LITERARY INSTITUTIONS,

A Sermon,

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Mat. ix. 38.—*Pray ye, therefore, the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.*"

In view of the present state of the world, my friends, it might seem needless to tell you, that "the harvest is plenteous, but the labourers few." Our Lord declared it to his disciples, when he looked upon their increasing numbers;—when he observed the nation awaking to a concern for their spiritual welfare; when he saw a fallen world groaning for deliverance. We might make the same declaration *now*, when his gospel has gone forth into all lands; and yet in many regions, there are no ministers to explain it, or dispense its ordinances. Multitudes are entirely destitute of the sacred ministry. Multitudes are taught to follow a false prophet, instead of a true Messiah. Many, even under a Christian priesthood, are not rightly instructed in divine truths. Yea, many in our own land have no competent instruction, and no regular ordinances. So few are the labourers among us, that from year to year we have many parishes vacant; and our missionary funds, scanty as they are, do not always find immediate employment. The injunction in the text is seasonable and urgent. "Pray ye the Lord, &c."

A truth obviously implied in this injunction is, that the labourers shall be such as the Lord shall send. "No man taketh this honour to himself, but he that is called of God;" he whose heart has become renewed by grace, and animated with a desire for the salvation of souls; he whom the Lord has favoured with such talents and acquirements, as may be useful in the work, and who will submit to be set apart to the office in the way the Lord has appointed. He should not be "a novice," an ignorant fanatic, with no qualification but an inward impulse; nor should he be a cold hearted formalist, depending upon natural powers and scientific attainments. He should not be admitted into the sacred office, nor consider himself fitted for it, unless he is endowed with such holy dispositions, and such intellectual qualifications, as may conduce to the honour of God, and the advancement of his cause.

That a supply of *such* labourers may be sent forth, we should pray to the Lord of the harvest. We should be instant in our entreaties, that he, who holds all hearts, and all worldly substance in his hands, would incline the souls of our young men to this service, and would devise means to qualify them for the work. For this, as well as every other blessing, he "will be inquired of" by his people. The command is positive, and should ensure obedience. "Pray ye, that he would send forth labourers!" When he was about to send forth the twelve, he "continued all night in prayer," and thus enforced his command by his example. When, from time to time we are assembled in his sanctuary, enjoying the privilege of his worship and ordinances, we should remember the destitute, and supplicate the Father of mercies, that he would "give them pastors according to his own heart, who will feed them with knowledge and understanding." In our social interviews, in our families, and in our closets, we should be earnest in our entreaties for the same object. And all with an humble sense of human weakness, and a *full* reliance upon divine grace.

But this is not all. Every prayer has a correspondent duty. Prayer for divine light, must be attended with scripture study and examination. Prayer for the pardon of sin, must be attend-

ed with repentance, and with faith in the Saviour's merits. And prayer for strengthening grace, must be attended with diligent exertions. So we must contribute, not only our prayers, but our exertions, for an increase of labourers in the Lord's harvest. He has provided the young men, and has enabled us, and made it our duty, to prepare them for the service of his sanctuary. It is incumbent on *us*, as much as on them, to contribute for evangelizing the world. If *theirs* is the task to go forth in the holy warfare, *ours* should be the task, through the divine blessing, to arm them for the contest, and support them on the way.

It is one of the auspicious "signs of the times," that within a few years past, there has been so much improvement in public opinion on this subject. In the last age there was hardly such a thing as charitable aid, in preparing indigent young men for the ministerial office. If there was any, it was merely some individual effort, in behalf of some favourite youth; while the great body of the indigent were shut out from the service of the altar. Thus many worthy men, who might have been useful in the ministry, were driven to secular employments. But public opinion has greatly improved. As in a worldly view it is a real sacrifice for men of suitable talents to engage in the sacred calling, so our liberal minded Christians have thought it reasonable, that if any such will give up themselves, it is the duty of the church to provide them an education in the first place, as well as a subsistence afterwards. And so they have provided. Vast sums have they contributed, and are contributing from year to year, to promote this worthy object. At first they made free donations to the students, so as to help them along, without much embarrassment. After a time they adopted the course of requiring half the sum advanced, and now they generally require the whole sum to be repaid after an entrance upon professional employment. In this way much good is done, many useful pastors and missionaries are brought into the service of the church, who might otherwise spend their talents upon mere worldly avocations.

But though this course is productive of immense good, it is often attended with some evils.

One evil attending it is, that the young men frequently become high-minded, and vain, after being taken from worldly employments, and devoted to literary pursuits. We see this effect, not only among those who have no serious dispositions, but often among those in a course of preparation for the sacred office; especially if they are taken from a low rank in life. They perhaps attract some notice by their talents and zeal; are at once introduced into the higher circles in society; are there loaded with flatteries and presents; sent to the academy and the college, and still flattered; till their humility gives place to pride, and their piety to ostentation, and yet, whatever may be the disposition of their hearts, they feel under obligation to enter the ministry; even their pride will not allow them to disappoint their benefactors; they go forward; and the result is sometimes injurious to the Christian cause. How much better to disappoint their benefactors, than to profane the sanctuary with unholy ministrations!

Another evil is, that the practice of loaning money to students, subjects them to great inconvenience at their first entrance upon professional life. Imagine the situation of the young man entering the ministry, encumbered with a debt of five or six hundred dollars. He sees many a weak parish vacant, where there is an opening for much good; but he cannot commit himself to it, because its small salary will not enable him to discharge his obligations. He must traverse the land in quest of a rich parish, for which perhaps he is not so well fitted; or he must waste his time in charge of some school, while the church is suffering for want of his labours. His embarrassments, at any rate, prevent his accumulating a library and other things, which are necessary to the success of his work. Besides all this, the very idea of living dependent on charity, while his disposition is forming, enfeebles his character, and infuses into it more of fawning sycophancy, than of manly vigour.

But what I shall mention as the last, though not the least, evil of the present course, is its leading to such awful waste of health and life. If the young man has ample means of his own, or among his friends, he may begin his literary course in

early youth; always have sufficient time for exercise; never study beyond his strength, and go through in respectable standing, and comfortable health. But this is a rare case, hardly to be named with the many dyspeptic, and consumptive cases, that occur among our literary men. An eminent professor in a theological seminary says, "The waste of health and life, among the youth of talent and high promise in our land, is enough to make any intelligent observer weep." Again he says, "Of candidates for the ministry, who have been habitual students, I doubt whether one in six, or even one in eight, brings to the service of the sanctuary, an unimpaired constitution." Another learned professor says, "Three-fourths of our diligent students impair their health by insufficient exercise, and probably it would be nearer the truth to call the proportion nine tenths. Another says, "I have never known a close student, who did not sooner or later destroy himself, if he neglected exercise." The President of a college remarks, "At least nine out of ten, among our diligent, industrious students, have in a greater or less degree, suffered the loss of health, by intense application to study, and a want of proper exercise." And further, "I cannot but consider a literary institution, which makes no provision for the regular exercise of its students, no better than a manufactory of invalids, and a slaughter-house of cultivated talent." Well now, if such is the case with good students in general, how much more so with those, who have but small means, who are obliged to enter college poorly prepared, and then be absent months every year, to earn something for their subsistence, and afterwards regain the time by more intense application! Hapless youths, if regarded in a worldly view; they imagine themselves hastening to a long period of usefulness in the Christian ministry, when most of them are hastening to a premature grave. "Among our young divines, and those now in preparation for the ministry," says another distinguished professor, "how few are there, who do not labour under the tortures of dyspepsy, or the wasting ravages of pulmonary consumption! "This," says an eminent physician, "is an evil, over which literature and religion have long mourned, and which has thin-

ned the Christian army to an alarming degree." The Christian army, composed of invalids, can hardly defend its own fields against the prince of darkness; how much less go forth into the enemy's land, and gain new conquests for its mighty King! The conquests will never be achieved, till we provide soldiers that can endure hardness, that can wield the sword of the Spirit with energy and power, and labour day and night for the conversion and salvation of the people.

What course then, shall be taken? There is one which will remove or diminish all the evils that we have mentioned, and *that is labour, daily manual labour*, through the whole period of education. Much bodily exercise is considered on all hands to be indispensable. The body must be invigorated by frequent effort and exertion, more especially, if it bears about a great and well-stored mind. Some have recommended sportive and amusing exercise, but they have never been able to bring it into general use. The Lord himself has told us what kind of exercise is best for us, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." This appointment, though a consequence of sin, was made in mercy, not only to procure us a comfortable subsistence, but to guard us against many natural and moral evils, to which a life of indolence would expose us. And he has not only made this appointment, but has so formed us, that we must fulfil it, especially in early life, or never attain the full perfection of our nature. Though we exercise our minds, and increase our knowledge never so much, yet, unless we strengthen our bodies by exercise it will be to little purpose. A languid body is in poor condition to gain knowledge, but in much poorer condition to use it. Some of the most eminent officers in our seminaries of learning have told us, that three or four hours of daily labour is necessary, in order to rear up good labourers for the Lord's harvest. One says, "for a close student, three hours in the twenty-four, of active labour, is certainly not too much." Another says, "as a general rule, three hours each day, properly divided into two or three periods, would be a suitable quantity for close students." Another, "three hours of bodily exercise daily, is the minimum quantity, which can meet

the demands of the human system." Others recommend four hours in the day, and some even more ; and they express a confidence, that the time thus spent in labour "will rather accelerate than retard progress in study." Such labour then, is no obstacle to literary improvement ; it is a great preservative of health, and saving of expense ; it enables the most indigent youth to acquire an ample education, without losing his independency of mind, or embarrassing himself with a tedious debt ; it leaves him at liberty, after completing his literary course, to enter what profession he pleases ; it promotes that humility which is essential to the Christian character, and fits a man, if necessary, to subsist upon a small support. In the language of Dr. Beecher, who has now the charge of a manual labour theological seminary, "Not less than three or four hours vigorous exercise is required to balance the exhaustion of six or eight hours hard study. Agriculture and mechanical employments, combining self-support with healthful exercise, and increased intellectual progress, is doubtless, the true manual labour system. This system should be commenced in childhood; acted upon in the Academy, College, and Theological Seminary, and in all subsequent periods of life ; and the man who has thus worked his way into the ministry, is both the Missionary and the Missionary Society ; he can build, if needful, both his log cabin and church, and with his own hands secure his bread, until the people learn to appreciate his labours."

My brethren, we should "pray the Lord to send forth labourers into his harvest," and should use the means that are implied in such a prayer. We should look out such youth as the Lord has fitted by nature and grace, for his special service, and should provide for their preparatory education. Considering that they have arduous duties to perform, we should put them in such a course as will best qualify them for their employment; not bring them up tender and delicate, so that they will need nursing all their days ; but confirm their health by suitable exercise, and thus fit them for even the most laborious station in the church of God. The church should raise up ministers for her own use ; and in no way can she do this on so

easy terms, and with so much permanent benefit, as by providing seminaries, whence students can nearly support themselves by their own labour. In times past, we have been sparing of our contributions for any such purpose; laying up in store, I trust, for vigorous efforts in time to come. The moment for action in this behalf has evidently arrived; the indications of providence are clearly before us; institutions are rising up in various parts of our land, combining economy and health with education. We should use our exertions to increase their number and their means; that thus the church may be supplied with effective labourers, and be sooner extended through the world.

UNCERTAINTY OF TIME.

Prostrate before thy throne I fall,
My God, my hope, my trust;
O, let me live to thee to-day,
Nor of to-morrow boast.

Time! O how swift its moments fly!
What millions have I lost!
O, may I seize the golden NOW!
Nor of to-morrow boast.

Before the present day is past,
My soul may meet its doom;
Now let me for salvation haste,
To-morrow ne'er may come.

To-day may I the Saviour know,
And in His name believe;
Nor let these precious moments go,—
To-morrow may deceive.

Thy sparing mercies still abound,
And I am out of hell;
To-day I am on mercy's ground,
To-morrow!—who can tell?

Grant, gracious Lord! at last I may
Before thy face appear;
And sing an everlasting day,—
There's no TO-MORROW there.